

'The Freedom'

A Defector Tells His Story

By Michael Crieg

In a modestly furnished hotel room near Chinatown, Tung Chi-ping, a former Communist Chinese official, spoke yesterday about the life of a defector.

"Don't mention the name of the hotel, please," said the darkly handsome, intense young man who, less than a year ago, was assigned to a Communist diplomatic mission in Africa.

Tung's decision to defect set a speed record. He escaped from the Chinese embassy in Usumbura, in the capital of Burundi, exactly 20 hours and 50 minutes. "They still say I was kidnaped by the Americans," Tung said, "and they've spent a lot of money, mobilized a lot of people, trying to get me back."

"I left my family and friends in Shanghai—and my girl friend, too," Tung said.

'DRAWBACKS'

"Just last year this month, I was in China. Now I'm on the other side of the world, and I miss my country—in spite of all the drawbacks—very much."

Now a student in an unidentified city, where an American magazine is paying my expenses—nothing fancy, though," Tung has been studying international relations and writing a book about his experiences.

Occasionally, as in San Francisco, anti-Communist Chinese Americans invite the 25-year-old defector "to study their free way of life."



TUNG CHI-PING
"The other side"

"The main difference is the high level of life here—and the freedom. Even your Negroes live better than some Communist officials."

His one criticism of American life: "People here don't take things seriously enough."

Tung first got the opportunity to observe "the other side of the world" on May 25, 1964, when he went to BURUNDI AS A CULTURAL ATTACHE WHO SPOKE FLUENT French.

Less than a day later, wearing slippers, a shirt and trousers, he went to breakfast with his former colleagues.

"I forgot to put my underwear on," he recalled, "but I did take the only money I had, a five-pound note, worth \$14."

"I finished breakfast early, and they thought I was going back to the hotel. Instead, I jumped into a taxi and went to the American embassy."

The cargo d'affaires there, Tung said, looked over the defector and told him: "Many try and many are fakes."

"I'm not joking," the young defector answered quietly. "I'm risking my life."

HELPED

The Communist hue and cry that he had been kidnaped helped to convince the embassy, he said.

There could be many more defectors, Tung said, if they had the chance.

"When the Communists send diplomatic personnel out of the country, only the ambassador and high officials are allowed to take their wives. And even then, their children remain behind."

"It's very rare that single persons like me are sent out. I can tell you that if there weren't so many police in CANTON, THE HOPELESS YOUNG PEOPLE IN THAT SOUTHERN CITY WOULD ALL BE FLOCKING TO Hong Kong."